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Orality Journal

The Word Became Fresh

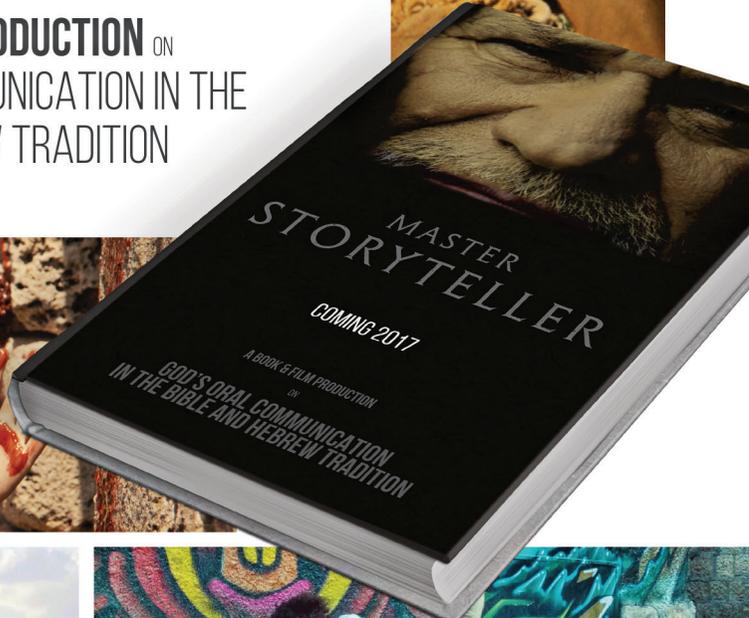
"Reformation: Five Hundred Years of Orality, Media and Memory"

**Konstanski • Araujo • Gidoomal • Kroneman • Blackwell •
Randolph • McClure • Handley • Parro • Foer • Mahendra •
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Cover Photo

All Saints' Church, (also called Schlosskirche or Castle Church), Wittenberg, Germany. Photo by Samuel E. Chiang.

It is on the door of this church where Martin Luther nailed his famous ninety-five theses.

¹⁶"For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. ¹⁷For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

Romans 1:16-17

Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear it and take to heart what is written in it, because the time is near.

Rev 1:3

"On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, ¹¹which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea."

¹²I turned around to see the voice that was speaking to me. And when I turned I saw seven golden lampstands, ¹³and among the lampstands was someone like a son of man, dressed in a robe reaching down to his feet and with a golden sash around his chest. ¹⁴The hair on his head was white like wool, as white as snow, and his eyes were like blazing fire. ¹⁵His feet were like bronze glowing in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of rushing waters. ¹⁶In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance."

Revelation 1:10-16

Orality Journal

The Word Became Fresh

Orality Journal is the journal of the International Orality Network. It is published online semi-annually and aims to provide a platform for scholarly discourse on the issues of orality, discoveries of innovations in orality, and praxis of effectiveness across multiple domains in society. This online journal is international and interdisciplinary, serving the interests of the orality movement through research articles, documentation, book reviews, and academic news. Occasionally, print editions will be provisioned. Submission of items that could contribute to the furtherance of the orality movement is welcomed.

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Co-Editors' Note

Samuel E. Chiang and William Coppedge

Memory and Media in Revelation, the Reformation and Digital Orality

The Church is having a great rummage sale. Phillis Tickle in her seminal book¹ suggests that every 500 years or so, there is a moving out of the old from the attic, decisions as to what to store, and movements towards embracing the new. This edition of the *Orality Journal* seeks to identify the nexus of relationships amongst orality, memory, and media. These articles, exploring topics like filmmaking, Bible translation, and digital orality, expose among other things the issue of integrating different modes of communication, whether oral, print, visual, or digital.

Written late in the same century that Jesus had sojourned, and in a "hearing dominant" culture where textuality was part of orality, the opening chapters of Revelation provide a fascinating example of integrated modes of communication. The Apostle John encounters "One like the Son of Man" (v. 13) and falls to the ground in worship. He is commanded to not fear but instead to write letters to the seven churches of Asia. At one level, this appears to be a straightforward literate method of communication as the Son of Man instructs, "Write the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and the things which will take place after this." Furthermore, the refrain, "to the angel of the church of ... write..." appears no less than seven times and not incidentally, in the letter to the church of Sardis, the divine *Book of Life* is referenced (3:5 italics added).

However, the significant oral dimension to these early chapters deserves attention. John's encounter with the Son of Man does not happen via the medium of writing, but through the spoken voice. "Then I turned to see the *voice* that *spoke* with me... and His *voice* [was] as the *sound* of many waters" (1:12,15) Furthermore, after being commanded to write, every letter begins, "These *are the words of Him...*" The words are being written down as remembered, and to be remembered. The written letters

represent words that were originally spoken and to be disseminated to the appropriate audiences, and the entire prophecy is to be "read aloud...and bless are those who hear and obey..." (1:3)

The Apostle John found himself at the nexus of orality, memory, and media, as was the time of the Greco—Roman era, as he encounters the spoken word (orality) and is being entrusted with the task of remembering (memory), and consequently, delivering these sacred messages (media). Central to every culture's unique understanding of memory and media is this central question of reliability—is the memory of this information true (or accurate), and has its delivery, in whatever mode, been faithful to the intention of its originator?

In light of such inquiry, one of the Son of Man's self-designations within his discourse with John stands out in bold relief: "These things says[1] the Amen, *the Faithful and True Witness...*" (Rev. 3:14, italics added). This Son of Man, who is called holy, who has the seven Spirits of God, who calls God Father—He is faithful and He is true.

It is worth considering these familiar words in the context of communication. Jesus, the Son of Man, the Son of God, through the incarnation not only declares the message of God but also is Himself the message of God. Jesus, who speaks orally with John, is the embodied message of God. Being the faithful and true witness means, among other things, that the information communicated through Jesus is true or reliable and it is faithful or trustworthy according to the intentions of the Father as the original communicator. Therefore, an argument is made that issues of memory and media, far from being peripheral concerns, are actually theological categories as much as practical ones.ⁱⁱ

The history of the Christian Church is in many ways a history of people trying to navigate the theological and also practical issues of communicating God's personal message—Jesus Christ. A timely reminder of one such individual comes this year as 2017 is the 500th year anniversary of Martin Luther's nailing his 95 theses to the Wittenberg church door and thus, the traditional beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

For Luther, the Bible was the written word of God, the gospel was the spoken word of God, and Jesus was the personal word of God.ⁱⁱⁱ For Luther, Christ Himself was present or "re-presented" through scripture. Thus, when a person or persons encounter the Bible, they are encountering the presence of Christ Jesus Himself. However, receiving and understanding the communication of Jesus Christ through scripture is only possible through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Luther's affirmation of the role of the Holy Spirit in the communication of Jesus Christ through the Bible is no more clearly seen than in the previously discussed early portion of Revelation. John is speaking with the Son of Man, Jesus Himself, but the final exhortation in all seven letters is not, "He who has an ear, let him hear me (Jesus)." Instead, Jesus points to the Spirit: "He who has an ear, let him hear what the *Spirit* says to the churches." To hear Jesus is to hear what the Spirit has to say.

To frame this from a different perspective, the Spirit takes the spoken words of Jesus, heard and then written by John, and translates them from written words into the spoken words of Jesus to be delivered and heard by the seven churches. Thus, the Spirit re-oralizes the written word so that it can be heard as the spoken word of Jesus. Furthermore, the same Spirit who enabled Jesus' words to be heard by the seven churches is the same Spirit who has enabled people down through the centuries (such as Luther) to have ears to hear.

Therefore, if the Holy Spirit is essential for the remembering and delivering of Jesus' spoken words through the written words of scripture, then one can suggest that the Holy Spirit is intimately concerned with our present-day understanding of the role of memory and media for sharing the good news. It is the Spirit who truthfully and faithfully translates the written biblical text, bringing it to life so that people today have to opportunity to choose to have ears to hear Jesus' offer of salvation.

Such integration requires fresh theological consideration regarding the dynamics between the spoken, the written, and the visual word even as pragmatic concerns regarding social media and the digitalized word beg for more attention and resources. In light of this tension, between

theology and practice, a tension at least as old as the Apostle John and experienced by none other than Luther, we offer this edition of the *Orality Journal*.

Sitting in the Wittenberg Cathedral where Luther nailed the 95 theses for the intellectuals and nobles of that time, and listening to the preacher exegeting Romans 1:16, my mind multi-threaded into what might we recover from the Gutenberg Galaxy so that we can live in the Zuckerberg Galaxy? For example, when we quote

For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires. (Hebrews 4:12)

We use this favorite verse about why people and cultures need the *printed* Bible. But do we think about the original context that when the New Testament writers referred to *the word* — the Greek term is *logos* — they *weren't talking about ink on a page*, nor digital pixels on a screen?

They were talking about a message that was spoken and understood. Even the phrase word of God, which Christians today use interchangeably for the Bible, literally means the orally proclaimed message of God. And, when John used *logos* to mean Jesus Himself, he was referring to the personification of that message.

As Luther experienced a changing of epochs with the Reformation, so mission communication today has witnessed the changing of epochs with the digitalization of the globe. The relevance of the relationship between orality and digital media is as near as our decision of what to post next on social media: a printed text, an image, or an oral recording. Perhaps in seeking to navigate such a complex communication environment, returning to Jesus' self-designation in Revelation can be a helpful fixed reference point, "These things says the Amen, the Faithful and True..."

Change happens, and here in the *Orality Journal* I wish to thank Billy Coppedge as co-editor. It has been a wonderful partnership where we both

learned and grew together. I want to extend my deepest appreciation to Billy Coppedge as it has been a deep privilege to put issues together. May the same Spirit who re-oralized Jesus' words for the first-century Christians and for Martin Luther continue to prick our own ears.

“Whoever has ears to hear,
let him or her hear
what the Spirit has to say..”



Samuel E. Chiang
Wittenberg, Germany



William Coppedge
Kampala, Uganda

ⁱPhillis Tickle, "The Great Emergence How Christianity Is Changing and Why. Baker, 2008

ⁱⁱWe tend to forget that even during the manuscript period, prior to the Gutenberg printing press, and especially in First and Second Century AD, the trust of memory was a way of life in the "hearing dominant society." Orality was the way of life, and textuality supplemented communications. In our current era where textuality is dominant, we tend to think orality is accommodated within the text. And we superimpose our frame and worldview of textuality back to First and Second Century AD. We should have a better understanding of the "setting"—which is orality is dominant and textuality is accommodated within the oral culture. See robust and deep research from John Walton and Brent Sandy, "The Lost World of Scripture," IVP Academia 2013.

ⁱⁱⁱDavid W. Lotz, "Sola Scriptura: Luther on Biblical Authority," *Union Seminary Review* 35, no. 3 (1981): 262–63. While some may disagree with Luther's theological differentiating of the word of God, one can appreciate his effort in trying to establish the necessity of the word of God for salvation.

Digital Orality: How to connect your digital footprint to the world's five billion oral learners

Paul Konstanski

Paul Konstanski's work as a project specialist with Cru has given Paul widespread exposure to a variety of approaches in ministry in many different settings. These experiences, combined with his unique blend of administrative skills and creativity, have often helped him lead people to think outside the box, yet in a way that is tied to practical application and getting things done. He has a degree in Leadership Communication Studies from the University of Minnesota, has been a lifelong learner of new technologies, and has always been an advocate of the key principles called the "lean start-up."

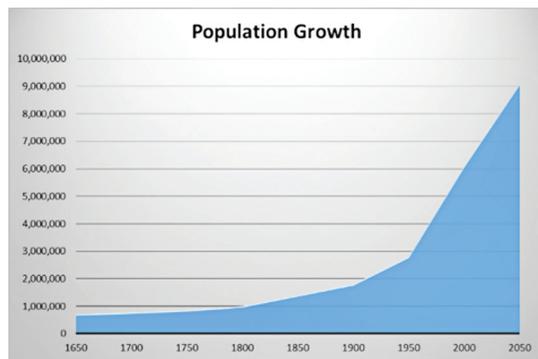
The earth has seven billion inhabitants. Did you know that two-thirds of them are oral learners? The number of cell phone subscriptions exceeds the earth's population. Orality and technology are interacting with each other at a mind-bending pace. Digital orality began with cutting-edge ideas like solar-powered cassette players. But today, nearly every living person on the planet is within digital reach. When oral principles are applied to the digital world, you establish a clear connection with the hearts of people. You teach in the way they learn best.

On the eve of World Water Day, the United Nations World Health Organization offered a sobering statistic: According to a recent study, more people on earth have access to mobile phones than they do to flushing toilets.¹

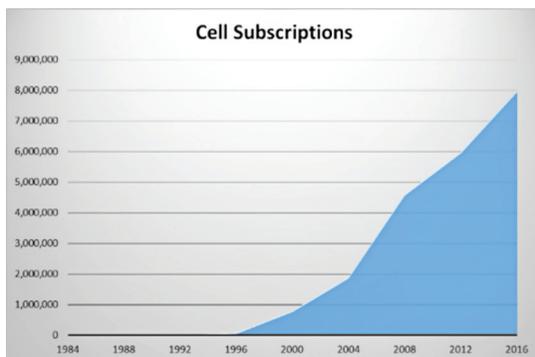
The following three graphs illustrate this concept.

The first graph shows the growth of world population over the past 350 years,

reaching one billion people on earth around 1800. The second billion came 123 years later. But then it exploded – currently adding a billion people every 12-15 years.²

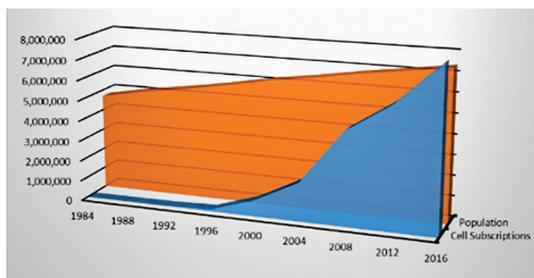


The **second graph** shows cell phone subscriptions for the past 30 years.³ It took a while to reach one billion subscriptions. But for the past ten years, it now only takes about three years to add another billion.



The **third graph** combines these two for the past 30 years. It clearly shows that the number of cell subscriptions has surpassed the world's population.

That does not mean that everybody on earth has a cell phone. A lot of people have two phones and there are all kinds of monitoring or text services that use a subscription. But what it does mean is that the world that you knew as recent as ten years ago is no longer the same.



For thousands of years, the routes of the Bedouins were determined by where the oasis was located. But in the past ten years, the routes are determined by where there is cell coverage. As long as you have cell coverage, you just call for someone to bring water.

The explosive growth of mobile phones continues to add to an information explosion in staggering

proportions. When you are holding a cell phone in your hand, you are holding a small computer. It has been rightly called a "brain in the hand." It can store information, take photos, and hold data.

Every day, the world's seven billion people send 500 million tweets⁴ and upload over 100,000 hours of video to YouTube⁵ (*see below sidebar for more impressive stats*).

Digital Footprint

Moving past these staggering numbers and bringing it down to daily life, the term "digital footprint" describes the trail of activity stored in electronic form. Every tweet, Facebook comment, and email you write (even website you visit) adds to this digital footprint. In the truest sense, your digital footprint is not limited to your online activities. It extends to the files you keep on your personal computer as well. Even if the file is never transmitted anywhere, it is still part of your footprint. Not limited to words, your footprint includes the videos you shoot and the audio recordings you make.

This is the definition for a "digital footprint." But what about the second half of the title of this article—orality. What is that?

What Is Orality

Orality is not a common phrase, and when you say it to someone not familiar with the concept, he or she may ask if you mean morality, or he or she may think you're talking about dental hygiene. For those new to this term, here is a one-minute definition developed to explain it visually.

One-Minute Orality Definition

If asked to define these shapes,

Did you know ...

By 2018, video will account for 2/3 of mobile usage?

More people own a mobile device than a toothbrush?

If Facebook were a nation, it would be the largest on earth?

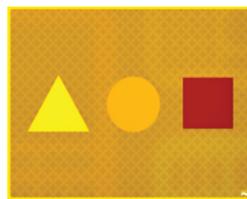
1 in 3 marriages start online?

The fastest growing demographic on Twitter is grandparents?

Every second, 2 people join LinkedIn? They just lowered the minimum age to 13.

Stats taken from Erik Qualman Socialnomics video on YouTube.

you would most likely say that they are a triangle, a circle and a square. For those of us who read and write, this would make sense.



We would use the geometric definition of the shapes. The recognition of shapes is a pre-skill to reading.

But for the two-thirds of the world who are oral learners, and especially those who do not read, they think in relational terms. To them, this becomes a mountain, sun, and a house. They think about how things relate to daily life. Oral learners define what they see in light of what they experience and what they understand.



Most often, when hearing this definition, people shake their heads and say, "Okay, I get it..."

Wikipedia defines "orality"⁶ this way: *Orality is thought and verbal expression in societies where the technologies of literacy (especially writing and print) are unfamiliar to most of the population.*

Walter Ong was a professor at St. Louis University who did a lot of study on orality. He even came up with another dimension called "Secondary Orality,"⁷ which is when a person who can read and write expresses him or herself orally. An example would be a newscast. The anchor is most often reading from a script, but sharing orally. For years, that has captured well most oral theory.

Oral Preference Learner

In recent years, a new phrase has come to the forefront: oral preference learner.⁸ This is a person who has the ability to read and write, but he or she prefers to learn orally.

It is estimated that two-thirds of the world's population are oral preference learners. For many, they have no other choice. But even in very highly literate societies, this same stat holds true. The difference is for them it is a choice. Even though they can read, they choose to learn orality. Within the International Orality Network, the phrase "Orality by Choice" is used to describe this group. They choose to be oral.

This preference for orality is beginning to have a profound effect on society.

Remote Control

One of the most influential inventions that changed how we told stories was the television remote control. Many under the age of 40 have never used a knob to change the channel on a TV. The idea of getting up to change the channel does not make sense to many.

It may seem that that was just an invention of convenience, but it

was a game changer that paved the way for the rapid and wholehearted embrace of orality by choice.

Prior to the remote, you typically watched programs in a very linear fashion. When a commercial came on, you would sometimes step out of the room, but there was constant.

Then, along came the remote control and the viewer was instantly empowered. If you did not like what you saw, a quick press of a button or two and you were instantly transported to a whole new genre or location. People were no longer tied to a linear story.

Present Shock

This non-linear approach even began to change the way people's brains function. In the book *Present Shock*⁹, author Douglass Rushkoff explains: "*Our society has reoriented itself to the present moment. Everything is live, real time and always-on.*"

He continues to explain some of the implications by saying this:

It's why kids in school can no longer follow linear arguments; why narrative structure collapsed into reality TV; and why we can't engage in

meaningful dialogue about last month's books and music, much less long-term global issues.

You can now find out about what is happening in some remote part of the world before CNN can assemble a camera crew to get there.

Those alive today and living in a culture that—as Qualman¹⁰ shows us statistically and Rushkoff points out historically—is radically different than 25 years ago. Even as literacy rates rise worldwide, we are becoming more oral in how we think and function. And this has major implications for how we seek to reach people for Christ and help train them in their faith.

Why This Matters

Two major themes are now established. The first theme is that people are living in a rapidly expanding digital world where personal information produces a digital footprint. The second is that people live in an oral world. Orality goes beyond the spoken word into a whole new way of relational thinking.

This article is about connecting those two worlds. Digital orality. How is that accomplished?

Whole New Mind

Author, speaker, and former speech writer for United States President Bill Clinton, Daniel Pink also wrote a book called *A Whole New Mind*.¹¹ In the book, he presents an idea that has shaped the thinking on this topic. Pink claimed that society is entering the "Conceptual Age." This concept provided the glue that brings digital and orality together.

It is the way to connect your digital footprint to the world's oral learners.

The Ages

History has commonly taught that society has gone through a series of ages—major blocks of time when human activity was dominated by a common theme.

Anthropologists traditionally start with the Stone Age, where humans were developing tools from their natural surroundings and they were primarily hunters and gatherers. The Agricultural Age followed, in which humans took control of the natural environment for sustenance. Jumping forward a few thousand years, people experienced the Industrial Age, which began to change the status quo. The world's population exploded. Cities began to grow

as people moved off the farms and into production. Life was no longer dominated by simply trying to find food and shelter.

The last half of the twentieth century ushered in the Information Age, also known as the "Digital Age." In the same way that machines transformed society, now information changed lifestyles. In the general sense, the world is still in the midst of the Information Age—we are accumulating information at an overwhelming pace. This has brought about a subtle societal change. It is no longer what you know; it is what you do with what you know.

Power Brokers

Before the Internet, the power brokers of society were doctors, lawyers, politicians, and educators. They had access to knowledge that the rest of the population did not have. As a result, they used that information to make decisions and to separate themselves from the masses. But today, with the abundance of information available at your fingertips, the Internet leveled the playing field.

It used to be that only the doctors and pharmacists could fully explain the potential risks and side effects of medications. But now, a simple

search on Google will bring you a wealth of information about the medicine you are taking.

Look also at how politics and news have changed. For example, compare the difference between what happened in Rwanda 25 years ago as contrasted to recent world events. In Rwanda, it took weeks for information to get out and for the world community to react. Leaders could withhold information or bias information in a certain way. Today, atrocities are being recorded and published to YouTube and Twitter in real time. The hashtags about an event quickly move to the top of the social media outlets within minutes. Governments can no longer wield the power of withheld information to control or manipulate people as easily as they could in the past. The Arab Spring clearly demonstrated what happens when people are empowered.

It is no longer just the doctors, lawyers, and educators who are the power brokers. It is the people. Information is king and the masses have been empowered.

Everybody Has a Voice

There is a flip side to this as well. Everybody has a voice. So how do you separate yours? How do you get your message to stand out from

the masses? What helps you get heard in the midst of all the noise?

The Conceptual Age

The idea of trying to get your message heard is the idea behind the "Conceptual Age." This is the connection between digital and orality. Pink explains that the Conceptual Age is where we take all of this information and make sense of it. It's where we put it to use.

There is a lot of competition to get people's attention. If you have a message to get out, you want people to hear what you say. How do you do that? How do you set yourself apart to influence people? What is it that makes the difference with why some ideas take off and flourish and some die? Why do some brands struggle to become profitable and others almost go viral on their own?

Six Fundamental Human Abilities—The Six Senses

Pink explains that in the midst of an information overloaded world, people who employ and use six fundamental human abilities or conceptual senses are the new power brokers. They are the ones that get noticed. These six ideas can provide a framework on which to connect your digital world to the oral world.

The six abilities are: Design, Story, Empathy, Symphony, Meaning, and Fun.

If there is one main thing to get out of this article, it is to develop the habit of always asking yourself the question about how well your idea, presentation, website, film, radio program, or whatever you are using implements these six senses. Are you drawing *oral preference learners* in with these six ideas?

Design

The best way to think of Design is to ask, "How does it look and does it work?" Have you noticed how websites have changed in just the past few years? Websites used to follow a standard pattern. A top header, a left menu, a navigation bar, a right body, and a footer that contains all the legal stuff. But now you are getting sites with full page photographs, interactive menus, a lot of white space, and most importantly, they look good on a mobile phone.

Who would have ever dreamed 20 years ago that we would be willing to pay for a single cup of coffee at a price where just down the street you could get a whole breakfast? It is not that the coffee costs that much; you are paying for the experience.¹²

A few years ago, a coffee chain determined that they could save millions of dollars by moving the coffee grinding operation out of their stores. A move into a central facility would have no negative effect on the taste of the coffee. But within days of this move, customers were complaining. They missed the smell of fresh ground coffee when they walked in the door. So, at a loss of millions, they brought back the local coffee grinding. It is all about the design and presentation—how it looks and how it grabs people.

Story

Apple is a company that understands these conceptual senses. Clearly, they understand Design. Their products are sleek and they please the eye. But Apple founder Steve Jobs also understood the importance of Story. He would not just give you the numbers; he would tell the stories of people's lives that were changed. Over the past 30 years, a major shift has occurred in how a corporation presents their annual report to shareholders. It used to be pages of stats and data. But many reports are now stories of how people's lives have been affected by the company's products.

At the Sochi Winter Olympics, Vladimir Putin had a woman next to him at the opening ceremony.¹³ It was a total surprise to her, but a calculated move on the part of Putin. She had a story that was heartwarming. In light of the action he was about to take in Crimea, it was brilliant. It made him look very personable.

In a phone conversation with Daniel Pink back in 2006, he said that in using Story, the Church was way ahead of the curve. That makes sense. Jesus has been telling stories for a long time. It is easy to imagine that the stories Jesus told—whether the sower and the seed, the cursing of a fig tree, or the shepherd and his sheep—were stories that were born out of the surroundings in which Jesus found Himself.

There is still a place for teaching and education in a very linear fashion. But what many teachers do not realize is that they are not connecting with nearly two-thirds of their audience who prefer to learn orally.

Why is it that you can be so captivated by a film? It is because you are brought into the story. In the same way that the idea of Design is used to ask how it

looks, the question with Story is, “Who does it involve?” Can you make the same point telling a story rather than just presenting the facts?

Empathy

This goes beyond simply telling the story and viewing it as an outsider. Empathy places you into the story. How much does the listener or reader feel that you know what he or she is going through?

On a website, you have ten seconds to convince the visitor that you can help meet a need in his or her life. When giving a talk, the listener needs to feel that you care about what he or she is going through. If the listener feels you have an agenda to present rather than to meet a need, you will lose him or her.

Empathy grabs at the emotions. Think for a moment about a time when you borrowed something and either lost it or returned it damaged. How did that make you feel? Do you want to face that person? When you share something that the listener can identify with and place themselves into the story, you gain empathy.

That is what you need to do with your presentations. That is how to

connect the digital footprint to the oral preference learner.

Symphony

This is where it all comes together. People like it when the dots are connected.

The musical instrument of an oboe by itself can sound obnoxious. But when you combine that painful, high-pitched squeal with the powerful brass, the delicate strings, the pounding percussion, and other mellow wind instruments, you make beautiful music.

Recall this statement from a few pages ago:

Two major themes are now established. The first theme is that people are living in a rapidly expanding digital world where personal information produces a digital footprint. The second is that people live in an oral world. Orality goes beyond the spoken word into a whole new way of relational thinking.

This led to the premise that this article was to bring those two worlds together. That is being accomplished in two ways.

First, there is a frequent review of the six senses. They are the core

of what you need to understand to join these two worlds. Second, you are asked the question about how you are using these six senses in your digital footprint. As you interact with people, places, and things, are you using all six senses? It is not about what you know. It must be about what you do with what you know. That is how it all ties together. But it is important to go past just tying it together. It must have meaning.

Meaning

The baby boomer generation was characterized by trying to be better off than their parents. The pursuit of wealth, power, and prestige were the desired end. Steve Douglass, President of Cru, tells the story of when he graduated from one of the world's most respected schools.¹⁴ He graduated near the top of his class and as he was walking up the steps to receive his degree, he felt as if each step he took was saying, "So What, Big Deal, Now What?" How often have you heard a very successful person say that he or she spent his or her entire life climbing the ladder of success, only to find it leaning against the wrong wall?

That is Meaning. Everyone looks for it and everyone want it. Many in today's younger generation are not pursuing the dream of being

better off than their parents. They are pursuing the dream of making their lives count.

Like Story, this is an area where the Christian community has also tended to be leading the charge. When Christians keep to the central message of the good news of Jesus Christ, they bring Meaning. But it is very important that we don't dilute the meaning by chasing irrelevant issues.

As you digitally engage people, bring some Meaning.

Fun

There is a flip side to Meaning and that is Fun. You need to be careful to not get so caught up in trying to make things meaningful that you fail to bring some laughter to life. There is a whole movement that is gaining ground that calls for people just to laugh. It is called "Laughter Yoga."

Medical doctor Paul McGhee says, "Your sense of humor is one of the most powerful tools you have to make certain that your daily mood and emotional state support good health."¹⁵

Research is showing tremendous health benefits to laughter and having fun. It boosts your immunity,

lowers stress, decreases pain, relaxes muscles, and prevents heart disease. Over 30,000 runners participate in the Indianapolis half-marathon of 13.1 miles each year. The course is lined with entertainment. Near the seven-mile point, there are some high school cheerleaders holding up placards with jokes on them. It gives the runners a chance to laugh and get a boost of energy for the remaining six miles.

Fun can bring the mental benefit of adding joy and zest to life, improve your mood, and enhance resilience. Socially, having fun strengthens relationships, makes you more attractive, and can defuse conflict. In a world filled with bits and bytes of information, make sure that you do not get so focused on your task that you do not have fun doing it. You can even incorporate Fun into some of the other senses. As you Design, add a fun picture or quote that will make people laugh.

When you tell your Story, share something funny that happened to you. Show people your Empathy by listening to what they say and including that in your presentation. Quote somebody you just met.

Fun also does not have to just mean laughter. It might even be better to think of it more broadly

as pleasurable enjoyment. If you were giving a tribute at someone's funeral, it would not be appropriate to share a joke. But you can include something about that person's life that brought a smile to your face.

So, when you have more serious topics, you can put people at ease, be personable, acknowledge the elephant in the room, and do things that release rather than increase tension.

As Applied to this Article

One of the things that is helpful to do when working on a website, preparing content for a talk, or even interacting with oral-relational people is to ask yourself this question: "How am I doing with these six things?"

As an exercise, this was done with this article.

Design: The layout is attractive. Relevant visuals were included. The paragraphs are short and there are subtitles that help with the flow. That was all by purposeful Design.

Story: Stories about Apple, Putin, Steve Douglass at Harvard, and the coffee grinder were shared.

Empathy: Some reflective questions were included, as well as things that could stir up some feelings. For example, Putin and the woman along with the Arab Spring, which is a story of emotion.

Symphony: Two terms that on the surface seemed like opposites were used: Digital and Orality. Your thinking was expanded to see the connections which was tied together with this focus on the six senses.

Meaning: Each person has a digital footprint and this article provides a way for you to better connect your digital world with the oral world that most people prefer to live within.

Fun: The illustrations and reflective questions were designed to make it a more Fun and positive experience. Points were broken up with some good stories.

The interesting thing is that on the first pass, it became clear that there was not enough Fun. So, a portion of the article was rewritten. As an example, the story about the half-marathon cheerleaders was added.

Use Same Approach Everywhere
This same approach could be used with websites, radio programs,

video presentations, mobile training, and other resources you develop. When you first start pulling your thoughts together, have these six elements in mind and look for places to build them into what you are doing.

Then, as you move along in your preparation, take a moment to do

what we just modeled by looking for specific places where these six senses appear.

If you do that, it will help to go a long ways towards moving you in the direction of connecting your digital footprint to the world's five billion oral learners.

¹<http://newsfeed.time.com/2013/03/25/more-people-have-cell-phones-than-toilets-u-n-study-shows/>

²<http://www.worldometers.info/world-population/>

³<https://www.statista.com/statistics/262950/global-mobile-subscriptions-since-1993/>

⁴<http://www.internetlivestats.com/twitter-statistics/>

⁵<http://www.jeffbullas.com/35-mind-numbing-youtube-facts-figures-and-statistics-infographic/>

⁶<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orality>

⁷Walter J. Ong. *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word* (2nd ed.; orig. 1982). Routledge, London and New York, 2002.

⁸Grant Lovejoy, ed., *Making Disciples of Oral Learners*. Lima, NY: International Orality Network, 2005.

⁹Douglas Rushkoff. *Present Shock: When Everything Happens Now*. New York: Current, 2013.

¹⁰<http://socialnomics.net/erik-qualman/>

¹¹Daniel H Pink. *A Whole New Mind: How to Thrive in the New Conceptual Age*. London: Cyan, 2006.

¹²<http://www.foxnews.com/story/2008/03/20/starbucks-to-fend-off-tailspin-with-new-coffee-grinding-beans-in-stores.html>

¹³<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2014/feb/07/putin-elegant-surreal-sochi-winter-olympics-opening-ceremony>

¹⁴Stephen B. Douglass, and Al Janssen. *How to Achieve Your Potential and Enjoy Life!* Singapore: IMprint Edition, 2009.

¹⁵<http://www.pbhm.com/Home/News/tabid/83/articleType/ArticleView/articleId/32/Laughter-Is-The-Best-Medicine.aspx>



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